



STATEWIDE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF AUTISM TASKFORCES



BARBARA FIRESTONE, PhD

Chair, Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces
Chair, North Los Angeles Autism Regional Taskforce

Dr. Barbara Firestone is President & CEO of The Help Group, the largest, most comprehensive and innovative nonprofit in the U.S. serving children with autism spectrum disorders and other special needs. Widely recognized for her leadership and vision, Dr. Firestone was appointed Chair of the Statewide Coordinating Council and Chair of the North Los Angeles County Taskforce and served as Vice Chair of the California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism. She recently established The Help Group-UCLA Autism Research Alliance dedicated to applied research and is the author of the highly acclaimed and award-winning book, *Autism Heroes: Portraits of Families Meeting the Challenge*.



JOHN MATTHIAS

Co-Chair, Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces
Chair, Sacramento Autism Regional Taskforce

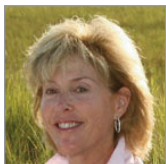
John Matthias is Chairman of the Sacramento Autism Regional Task Force (SART) and Vice-Chairman of the California Coordinating Council of Regional Task Forces. John is the Assistant Controller of PRIDE Industries and serves on the Board of Directors of the UC Davis MIND Institute and Families for Early Autism Treatment. He is a founder and Director of the Alliance of California Autism Organizations and is Chairman of the Placer County SELPA Community Advisory Committee and the Autism Speaks Sacramento Advocacy Committee. He organized the statewide California Congressional Autism Breakfast and is a Partners In Policymaking alumni.



ANGELA BARKER

Co-Chair, San Francisco/Marin Autism Regional Taskforce

Angela Barker is an autism volunteer-activist. She is married and has one son who is on the spectrum. Angela is passionate about politics and issues related to autism. Her previous career was in commercial real estate in San Francisco. She lived in Beijing and Hong Kong before settling in Marin County in 1995.



JAN BLACHER, PhD

Co-Chair, Inland Empire Autism Regional Taskforce

Jan Blacher is Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education and Founding Director of the SEARCH family autism resource center at the University of California, Riverside. Her NIH-funded research concerns family, school, and cultural influences on behavior disorders and social competence of youth with developmental disabilities. Dr. Blacher is Vice President of the *International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability*. She is the North American Editor of the international *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, and a columnist for *Exceptional Parent* magazine. Dr. Blacher is a Fellow of AAIDD, APA, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).



JAMES M. BURTON

Co-Chair, East Bay Regional Autism Taskforce

James M. Burton is the Executive Director of Regional Center of the East Bay, which has responsibility for community services and supports for over 15,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Jim has over 30 years of experience in service to people with developmental disabilities. He served as Chief Financial Officer at the Golden Gate Regional Center for 25 years and as interim Executive Director of the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) in 1997 and 1998. Jim assumed the position of Executive Director of RCEB in 2001 where he has developed a collaborative spirit in working with consumers, families and service providers.



KRISTEN BYRNE

Co-Chair, Sacramento Autism Regional Taskforce

Kristen Byrne is an IT Process Consultant for a global specialty retailer since 1993. Kristen began advocating for those affected by autism and fundraising for scientific research in 2007 when her sons were diagnosed with autism. Kristen is the founding Walk Co-Chair of Sacramento's Autism Speaks walk. She is grateful to serve on the Sacramento Autism Regional Task force and is optimistic about the progress the team is making towards legislation for those affected by ASD and related disorders. Kristen is a mother to 3 beautiful children; Megan, Devan & Ethan. Kristen and her family reside in Rocklin.



MICHAL CLARK, PhD

Co-Chair, Kern Autism Regional Taskforce

Michal C. Clark received a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Stanford University in 1969. He worked for nine years as a college professor and researcher and then worked for nine years managing a plumbing & mechanical contracting firm. In late 1986, he became the director of Kern Regional Center in Bakersfield, California.

Dr. Clark and his wife have three children. The youngest, Marnie, has Down syndrome. Mike and Norleen founded a Down Syndrome Parents Group after Marnie's birth. Mike became active with the National Down Syndrome Congress and served as its president from 1990 thru 1993. He served as the president of the Association for Regional Center Agencies from 1991 to 1994.

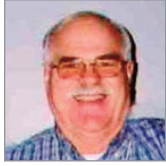
Michal Clark and Kern Regional Center have been on the forefront of implementing numerous innovative strategies and techniques in the delivery of services to people with developmental disabilities. He has served in a leadership capacity with many different disability organizations. He also has made numerous presentations to national and regional groups on the delivery of services to people with developmental disabilities.



JOE DONNELLY, MD

Co-Chair, Orange County Autism Regional Taskforce

Dr. Donnelly is a pediatric neurologist who received his B.A. from Harvard, M.D. from Georgetown and completed pediatrics and neurology training at Boston City Hospital. He practiced 25 years in Massachusetts before joining UC Irvine in 2002 as a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, and is currently Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs. He is a member of the CHOC Pediatric Sub-specialty Faculty and Chapter 4 AAP. He is the Director of the CHOC-UCI Neurodevelopmental Programs, including For OC Kids and Help Me Grow. He has a special clinical interest in supporting families and caring for children with autism, ADHD and other developmental disabilities.



CHUCK GENSEAL

Co-Chair, Central Valley Autism Regional Taskforce

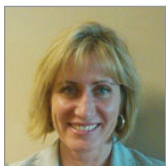
Retired California Correctional Officer of ten years, State Prison (1993-2003) AA Degree in Criminal Justice. Grandfather of 9 yr old Michelle Dx Autism Retts (2004) Co Chair Central Valley Autism Regional Taskforce. (2010) Vice President Families for Effective Autism Treatment-Fresno Madera Counties (2009) Manage FEAT web site, produce FEAT Newsletter for 6,380 subscribers. Member of Steering Committee for Alliance of California Autism Organizations (2008-10) (monitor & participate in hearings on California and Federal Autism related Legislation) Chairman of the Madera-Mariposa Special Education Local Plan Area Citizens Advisory Committee (2005, 7, 9) Parent Advocate for IEPs, Due Process, IPPs, & Fair Hearings in various counties and Districts (2005 to present).



NANCY GOLDBERG

Co-Chair, San Francisco/Marin Autism Regional Taskforce

Nancy Goldberg is currently Vice President of Jewish Family and Children's Services as well as chairing their Public Issues Committees. She is also Co-Chair of the S.F. Collaborative Against Human Trafficking, Board Member of the New Israel Fund, Immediate Past Chair of JPAC (Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California), and member of the JPAC Executive Committee. Nancy Co-Chairs, with her daughter in law, Angela Barker, the State Senate Committee Task Force on Autism for Marin and San Francisco, and has a grandson on the spectrum.



LISA JACKSON, MS

Co-Chair, Bay Area Regional Taskforce

Lisa Jackson is the housing specialist for the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). Lisa completed her Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from San Jose State University. She started her career working with people with developmental disabilities at Hope Services where she managed the Supported Living Program and started the Independent Living Services program. For eight years, Lisa worked at Housing Choices Coalition where she worked as the executive director since 2002. Lisa played a crucial role in working to ensure over 200 very affordable apartments units would be set-aside for people with developmental disabilities.



KRISTIN JACOBSON

Chair, Bay Area Autism Regional Taskforce

Kristin Jacobson, Co-Founder and President Before co-founding Autism Deserves Equal Coverage, Kristin Jacobson co-founded the Bay Area Autism Advocacy Group to organize parents to advocate for legislative reform for autism. The group became the advocacy group for Autism Speaks and Kristin now serves as statewide Advocacy Chair for Autism Speaks. She is leading the effort to get autism insurance reform passed in California. She serves on the Steering Committee of the Alliance of California Autism Organizations, representing more than 40 autism organizations around the state, is a Council Member on the Statewide Coordinating Council of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, Chair of the Bay Area Autism Regional Task-force (BAART) (Co-chair of Insurance Subgroup) and served on the Autism Advisory Workgroup for the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC). Kristin has testified numerous times before the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism and at California legislative panels and hearings. Kristin has a Masters in Business Administration from Stanford and has spent her career in healthcare marketing, with a specialty in health insurance reimbursement. Kristin



co-founded the ASD insurance help yahoo group to assist parents with insurance issues.
PATRICK MAHER, MD
Co-Chair, North Bay Autism Regional Taskforce

Patrick J. Maher, M.D. is a Developmental Pediatrician and medical consultant for the children's unit at North Bay Regional Center (NBRC). At NBRC, he does neurodevelopmental evaluations and consultation and is a member of the interdisciplinary eligibility team. Patrick was instrumental in the creation of the Collaborative Autism Diagnostic (CAD) Clinic and the Autism Community Team (ACT) which serves Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties. He has been a member of the Advisory Committee of two important Department of Developmental Services' projects: "Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Best Practice Guidelines for Screening, Diagnosis and Assessment" and "Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Best Practice in Inter-Organizational Collaboration". He currently is co-chairperson of the Advisory Committee and a member of the Oversight Committee for the DDS project: "Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Best Practice Guidelines for Effective Intervention". Patrick is very proud to serve as Co-Chairperson for the North Bay Autism Regional Taskforce (NBART).



AREVA MARTIN, ESQ
Chair, South Los Angeles Autism Regional Taskforce

Areva D. Martin, Esq. is an award-winning attorney, syndicated columnist and author. The founding and managing partner of Martin & Martin, LLP and the co-founder and President of Special Needs Network, Inc., Areva is a regular contributor on the Dr. Phil Show and other national shows. She is considered a leading authority on advocacy and disability rights and is the author of *The Everyday Advocate: Standing Up for Your Child with Autism* which was released this April by Penguin Books. Areva, a former member of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism, serves in leadership roles on a number of non-profit boards. She is the recipient of numerous awards and currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband and three children, the youngest of whom has autism.



MARY MOLLWAY
Co-Chair, South Counties Autism Regional Taskforce

Mary Mollway is the Executive Director of New Vision Children's Services and the Director of the New Vision Autism Center, a non-profit autism resource and treatment center located in Temecula, CA. Mary utilizes her background as a teacher and school administrator to assist parents in understand their IEP rights and to help determine appropriate goals and services. She left school administration in 2006 to start New Vision, a non-profit organization that seeks to assist children with a variety of special needs. She is proud to have been named Riverside County Woman of the Year (3rd District) for 2009 by the Riverside County Women's Commission.

ROBERT PHILLIPS
Co-Chair, North Bay Autism Regional Taskforce



RAMONA PUGET

Co-Chair, Kern Autism Regional Taskforce

Ramona Puget of Bakersfield, California has been working with the autism community since her 2nd eldest son was diagnosed with autism in 2000. It is this passion of helping him and others that has led her to advocate for autism spectrum disorders. She is employed with Kern County Superintendent of Schools as the Supplemental Autism Program Supervisor. An after-school program focused on enriching the ongoing progress of children with autism. She is a graduate of California State University, Bakersfield, with a B.S. in Psychology. She is the president of the local Kern Autism Network, a Chapter of the National Autism Society for the past 7 years. Married for 21 years and raising four children, ages 19, 18, 11 and 5; two of them having a diagnosis of autism. Ramona currently serves on the Kern Regional Center Advisory Committee and is the chair of the local Kern Autism Regional Taskforce, sponsored by Senator Roy Ashburn.



ROBERT RIDDICK, LCSW

Co-Chair, Central Valley Autism Regional Taskforce

Robert Riddick is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. He is the Executive Director of Central Valley Regional Center serving Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, and Tulare Counties. Regional centers provide case management services and advocate on behalf of California's developmentally disabled citizens. Autism is one of the qualifying conditions for regional center services, the others being cerebral palsy, mental retardation, seizures and other conditions similar to mental retardation.

Mr. Riddick has been affiliated with the California regional center system for nearly 40 years and has seen the regional centers evolve into a vital part of the human services system in California.



DENNIS ROBERSON

Co-Chair, Orange County Autism Regional Taskforce

Dennis Roberson is currently Chief of Special Education Services Division of the Orange County Department of Education. He has been an educator for 38 years: Teacher, Program Specialist, Coordinator and Director of Special Education in Orange County and Los Angeles County. He has lived in Mission Viejo for 35 years with his wife, Deanna. They have three sons, all graduates of Mission Viejo High School, and eight grandchildren. He is currently president of California State Council for Exceptional Children.



JEFF ROSS

Co-Chair, Kern Autism Regional Taskforce

Jeff Ross has served as Director of Student Support Services, at Taft College since 1976. Jeff is a Learning Disabilities Specialist and Developmental Disabilities Specialist. Among Jeff's many professional accomplishments is the design and establishment of the Taft College *Transition to Independent Living (TIL) Program* for individuals with developmental disabilities. This highly successful on-campus residency program for developmentally disabled young adults is the only one of its kind on a community college campus and has received both local and national recognition for its out-

standing accomplishments. He is co-founder of the *California Consortium for Post-Secondary Options for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities* and the *National Community College Consortium for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities*.



CHANTAL SICILE-KIRA

Co-Chair, South Counties Autism Regional Taskforce

Chantal Sicile-Kira is an award-winning author, speaker, and leader in the field of autism and adolescence and transition to adulthood, with over 20 years of experience as a parent and professional. Her books are: *Autism Spectrum Disorders*, *Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum*, *Autism Life Skills*, and *41 Things to Know About Autism*. Her first practical experience with autism was at Fairview State Hospital, teaching self-help and community living skills to severely developmentally disabled and autistic adolescents in preparation for their de-institutionalization, and at then at Orange County Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled. For more information, go to www.chantalsicile-kira.com.



REBECCA SILVA, PhD

Co-Chair, Inland Empire Autism Regional Taskforce

Dr. Rebecca Silva is the Special Education Administrator for Riverside County Office of Education, with thirty years of experience as a special education teacher, grant coordinator, university instructor, and administrator. She currently coordinates the Reach Autism Program, providing evidence-based interventions for classroom and in-home settings, and professional development for teachers, staff and parents.

Dr. Silva graduated with a B.S. from Ball State University and earned her Ph.D. at UC, Riverside. Dr. Silva has presented at numerous conferences and written grants, articles and curricula on special education topics related to Autism; Behavioral Intervention; Standards, Assessment and Curriculum; and Transition from School-to-Career.

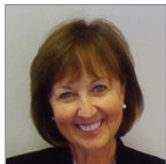


ROCIO SMITH, MSW

Co-Chair, East Bay Regional Autism Taskforce

For 30 years, Rocio de Mateo Smith has worked in the field of Developmental Disabilities. As Director of Area Board 5, Smith advocates for the rights of people with DD, both individually and systemically. Before, she was the DD Coordinator for Alameda County, and previously was Director of a Fremont-based program for infants and families.

Born and raised in Mexico, Smith attended University in Mexico City, where she received a BA in Mathematics. Later, she received a BA in Psychology from Cal State/Hayward and an MSW from UC Berkeley. In 2008, Assemblywoman Loni Hancock honored Smith as Woman of the Year.



JANIS WHITE, EdD

Chair, Orange County Autism Regional Taskforce

Dr. Janis White is the Chief Operating Officer of the Regional Center of Orange County, providing services and supports to 16,500 people with developmental disabilities. She came to the Regional Center from Education while serving on the Interagency Autism Group. This group has been working collaboratively with the community for the last 15 years to address the specific needs of the growing number of children with autism. Her background includes special education administrator, school principal, program specialist, speech therapist and a classroom teacher serving at the district and county level.